Amendment to the Specification

In accordance with the Examiner's instructions, please amend the specification as follows: Delete paragraph [0012] from page 4 of the specification under the heading **Background of the Invention,** and move the deleted paragraph to page 7 under the heading **Summary of the Invention.** The paragraph so moved will now be situated between paragraphs [0029] and [0030] of the specification, and will be referred to as paragraph [0029a].

The paragraph deleted from the **Background of the Invention** and moved to the **Summary of the Invention** is as follows:

[0029a] ~~In contrast, the~~ The present invention provides a method for general users to efficiently retrieve non-sparse data as well as to retrieve the incremental differences in one or more files. Two new extended operation system level instruction calls are provided for reading and for writing changed data. The extended read call employs two time stamps and returns the incremental changes between them. When reading into a sparse region of a file, the call returns data only up to the beginning of the sparse region plus an indication of the length of the region. This allows an application to skip over the sparse region without explicitly reading zeros. The second extended call is an extended write call which allows the user to explicitly specify holes in the file so as to allow the file system to de-allocate unnecessary blocks. The programming interface for the extended read call and extended write calls are shown below in the Appendix.